

that no honest thinker can believe in Christianity? It may be said that in the interests of "free discussion," even such articles must be allowed. Very good. Are the publishers of the *CANADIAN MONTHLY* prepared for the first consequence? We must be allowed space to show the reasonableness of our faith, and its consistency with all true modern thought. And it is impossible to do so in anything like the space that is sufficient for an assumption. In one line it can be assumed that the moon is made of green cheese. An astronomer, if obliged to disprove the assumption, could not be confined to a paragraph.

A book of three hundred pages lies before me. It was written 140 years ago, and the author thus explains why it was written: "It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is not so much as a subject of enquiry; but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world." We do not expect a Bishop Butler in every age. But if he

required to write the *Analogy of Religion* to disprove the contemptuous assumption of his time, to what length would the writing of men far inferior necessarily extend?

A generation or two passed, and the French Encyclopedists took the place of the English Deists. David Hume was present at a supper in Paris with a score of philosophers, and found that he was the most orthodox man in the party. He alone thought it possible that there might be a God. As for the miserable Jews who wrote the Scriptures, it was too much honour to refer to them. Well, the Encyclopedists too are forgotten, and the history of Christianity since has been a succession of Revivals which have prepared, and are preparing, the way for a greater Revival than has yet been known. The Church's answer has been like the answer of Nehemiah to the Sanballats who despised his wall—"Let us rise up and build."

I have given two modern instances that might suggest the propriety of modesty to those who say they cannot believe. Every generation back to the days of our Lord could supply instances of its own. Truly, the iron and the earthen jars have sailed in company. But which is the iron? And where are the earthen?